

# DRAFT 2

# FEASIBILITY REPORT

proposing a

*VISION FOR OUR WATERFRONT AND HARBOR*

via the creation of a

# MARITIME HERITAGE DISTRICT

# OVERLAY

PREPARED BY THE  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT



CITY OF ST. MARYS, GEORGIA

DRAFT 2 – April 15, 2013

# **MARITIME HERITAGE OVERLAY DISTRICT**

**VISION:** When the vacant land that became the City of St. Marys was laid out in 1787, our founding citizens envisioned a vibrant and energetic City tied to our Waterfront.

This vision has gone through many cycles, and in 2013, this vision is proposed to be rejuvenated via the establishment and implementation of a Maritime Heritage District (MHD).

This report will outline the basic parameters for a Maritime Heritage District (MHD) overlay for the Water and adjacent Marsh areas of the City of St. Marys. The report will discuss broad concepts for this district with any detailed discussion of implementation plans, environmental impacts, funding, and/or the maintenance and operation of any the MHD will be part of a later presentation – individually or collectively - on how to implement any portion of this study.

**IMAGINE:** Imagine the special feeling you will get when you pass over the Dark Entry Creek Bridge and observe the tide and marsh. It is a special feeling that this is just not any city, but a unique City that blends nature with man. This glimpse is a ‘tease’ as the visitor that passes through our vehicle oriented commercial zone deeper into the City. Crossing the railroad tracks, one has a long view to the start of a tree lined boulevard, with landscaped center islands dotted with historic Georgia plants. Going deeper into the boulevard, the live oaks that the City is known for envelops you and invites you into a cool shady live oak and cedar lined streetscape, with vibrant shops with apartments above. You finally reach the river, with ships anchored, hotels and restaurants, commercial establishments, sidewalk cafés, museums, and an expansive view of the St. Marys River and marshes. People milling about with our City with a vibrancy that matches our potential and sharing our love of our City and Waterfront with a host of new friends.

**ANTICIPATED OUTCOME:** The expected outcome of this study will be the establishment of a renewable framework that will encourage the creation of a vibrant and active waterfront by identifying commercial, museum, tourism, historical, cultural and educational uses that will preserve and enhance the City’s historic character, both landside and waterside, while providing current and future opportunities for exploring the maritime heritage of the City – without modification of the underlying zoning of any of the included parcels via the creation of the overlay district.



This MHD will permit the establishment, continuation and expansion of such uses and activities in ways that will maintain and enhance compatibility with existing uses and the surrounding neighborhoods within and outside of the Historic District.

The MHDs initial goals are to:

- ❖ Better coordinate the utilization of the waters of our St. Marys River as related to compatible land development.
- ❖ Increase and guide tourism and economic development opportunities.
- ❖ Support environmental stewardship of our land and water resources and the intervening marsh and ‘mud’ areas.

- ❖ Celebrate and recognize the unique linkage of our waterfront and its history with the Naval ships of the past that regularly used the docks, live oak forests and shipyards that is continued in the modern era by personnel of the Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base, our crabbing fleet, and our shrimping fleet.
- ❖ Assist the State and Federal agencies in governing the water and land areas within our City limits in accordance with the approved and adopted City Long Term Comprehensive Plan and applicable Federal, State and Local laws and regulations.
- ❖ Share our wonderful historic past with the world outside of St. Marys through the establishment of a museum showcasing our past, present, and future.
- ❖ Ultimately attract up to 5 tall ships to use the St. Marys Harbor for regular visits with the goal of having these ships establish St. Marys as their home port and provide community service to our residents and tourists.

The Report will provide basic background and supporting documents that address the rationale for creating a Maritime Heritage District Overlay.

**HISTORIC CONTEXT:** The City of St. Marys is tied to the sea in many ways via our vibrant waterfront. Since 1799, when the galley *St. Marys* was launched from the St. Marys waterfront, St. Marys has been at the forefront of maritime history. The Spanish built a fort at Cumberland Island and most definitely were aware of the St. Marys River.

George Washington mentions the

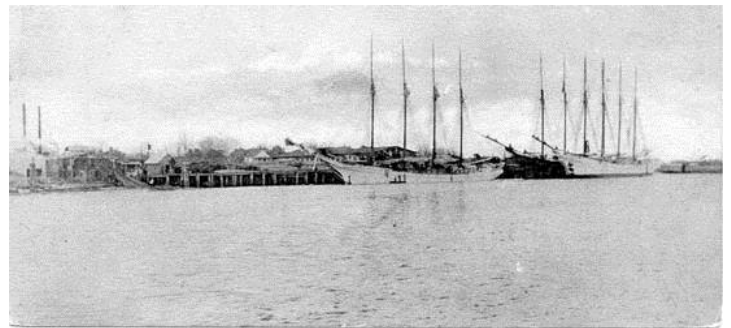
fortification of St. Marys in one of his written orders as President. The British Royal Navy and Marines fought our American Troops at the tail end of the War of 1812. Gunboats scoured and

scoured the river banks during the Civil War, wreaking havoc on industry and residents alike. Clipper ships called at St. Marys on a regular basis. Minesweepers were tied up at the pavilion during WWII, with an aircraft spotter ‘booth’ occupying the roof. Shrimp Boats of all vintages plied the river for Georgia Wild Shrimp, and created a tasty industry. Submarines came and stayed. Today, ferries have arrived to take people to the now pristine Cumberland Island

National Seashore.

St. Marys has become known as the place to go to get away from it all – a respite from the ways of modern civilizations. Instead of a white sand beach as the final destination, we have a beautiful waterfront that our City fathers created out of old docks and piers, for all of our citizens – and visitors - to enjoy.

How can the City encourage tourists to visit our waterfront and enjoy the sights and sounds of a sailing seaport? Since we have no beach, our forefathers used the next best coastal asset to attract visitors – our waterfront and harbor. The harbor is a beautiful deep water harbor that can accommodate the sailing ships of our historic past as well as modern replica vessels and smaller cruise ships. These vessels can enter the harbor and view pristine marshes without having to contend with freighters, large cruise ships, and other vessels. A harbor that has the potential to regain the elegant beauty of furled sails and crossed



masts, bringing with them romance and tourists. A harbor where the fishing and crabbing industry can exist side by side with pleasure boaters and cruise ships.

The broad outline of the concept for a Maritime Heritage District was first proposed in 1998 by then Mayor Jerry Brandon. At that time, the City was in the process of redefining their access to the waterfront, and grappling with what direction the City desired to take. Many options for the waterfront were presented and discussed.



When the air cleared, after a thorough analysis of the options, City Council approved the purchase and development of the Howard Gilman Memorial Park. This park has forever solidified the intense relationship of the citizens of St. Marys to their waterfront. The park is a popular destination for our many residents and visitors.



Over the years, many school ships have anchored in our harbor and at Lang's Marina Docks. During Thanksgiving Week, a community sponsored feast fills the harbor with those boaters and their vessels that cannot get home to their families. When the ships are here, so are tourists, and interested residents. The hospitality of our City is well known up and down the Coast.

The arrival of school ships and other sailing vessels has created excitement and increased tourist visits to our waterfront. Review of available data has indicated that there is a potential to increase visitation to our waterfront via attracting and home porting as many tall ships as possible (five maximum at any time). *(Ship shown is a 'historic' view of the school ship 'Spirit of Massachusetts' at the SMIG dock.)*



Prior to the founding of St. Marys, the water and landside areas of the waterfront at various times were under the flags of France, Spain, and England. When England and Spain agreed to a border between the two colonies, it was determined that the border would be the center of the navigable channel of the branch of the St. Marys River that had the largest flow. Then, when St. Marys was originally laid out in 1787, the border between the fledgling United States and Spanish Florida remained as the centerline of the navigable channel. Since that time, the city limits of St. Marys has been defined as the Centerline of the river between Georgia/St. Marys and Florida/Nassau County as measured from the mean high water mark.

**PORT DESIGNATION:** The Port of the City of St. Marys is one of three ports still authorized by the State of Georgia - the other two are Brunswick and Savannah. This designation permits the Harbor to be used for commercial endeavors. The City also has the ability to reactivate the Pilotage Commission, which provides piloting services to any vessel intending to use the St. Marys anchorage. The Pilotage Commission is inactive, due to the lack of commercial vessels heading to our harbor, as well as a minor dispute with the US Navy over pilotage to the Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base. If the harbor gets busy again, there may be a need for this Commission to be reactivated.

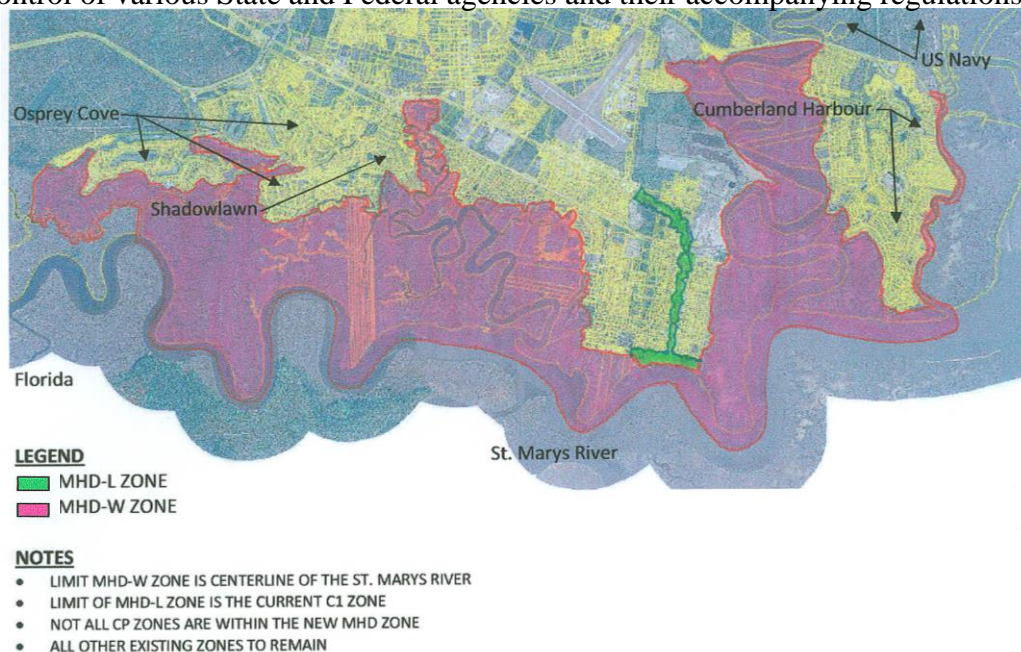


**LIMITS OF MARITIME HERITAGE DISTRICT:** The MHD will be comprised of two separate and distinct parts: the Landside part (MHD-L) and the Waterside part (MHD-W). Both MHD-L and MHD-W will be strongly linked to each other to create an integrated approach to our Maritime Heritage.

The St. Marys Waterfront, waterside and landside, is unique as it embodies the essence of St. Marys and is a major economic engine for the City. For the Waterfront Area to thrive, it needs flexibility to change, with a mixture of commercial, recreational, and educational facilities as well as visitor accommodations to meet changing demands. At the same time, the Waterfront Area is surrounded by a large residential neighborhood and that the cars, buses, RVs and pedestrians that a developed waterfront attracts can disrupt normal residential life for residents. To allow the Waterfront area to thrive as an important institution in the City and also to assure residents that its existence will enhance and not disrupt the surrounding residential neighborhood, the City is considering the implementation of a Maritime Heritage District (MHD) overlay.

Limits of Maritime Heritage District (MHD): The MHD shall include both landside (MHD-L) and waterside (MHD-W) areas.

- a. The MHD-L (**landside**) portion of the MHD shall follow the limits of the C-1 zone as to the depth of the MHD-L. Any expansion of the proposed MHD-L must comply with the criteria included herein, and any such change shall be made in such a way as to not disrupt the quality of life of the surrounding residential neighborhood.
- b. The MHD-W (**waterside**) portion of the MHD shall include all water and marsh area as defined by the Coastal Marshland Protection map and/or delineated on the Official Map of the City. This water area shall extend from the legal limits of the City, to the center of the navigable channel of the St. Marys River, which is also the border of the City and the State of Georgia, including all water and marsh, whether publically or privately owned from the legally determined edge of the marsh. This area is already under strict control of various State and Federal agencies and their accompanying regulations.



**LIMITS OF MARITIME HERITAGE DISTRICT OVERLAY ZONES – MHD-L and MHD-W**

**REGULATORY ENTITIES:** The proposed MHD is contained within a number of jurisdictional areas. Compliance with some or all of these agencies will be necessary for any project to be implemented in the proposed MHD.

- a. US Coast Guard: The River is under two jurisdictions, one based in FL and one based in GA. Each sector has port jurisdiction, as well as other jurisdictional missions. It will be necessary for each to be involved in the process for the implementation of the various components of the Maritime Heritage District. They will not need to be involved with the creation of the MHD, but will need to be involved with jurisdictional issues. Each entity has differing rules based on local issues. Coast Guard certification of any vessel must be acceptable under the rules of both jurisdictions.
- b. US Army Corp of Engineers: Normally not an issue on inland waterways, the St. Marys River is shared by two states, making it a River under nominal jurisdiction of the Federal Government.
- c. Federal EPA: The EPA is involved if the States do not comply with EPA regulation since the River is shared by two states.
- d. Georgia DNR (and various sub agencies): The DNR has jurisdiction over the water and marshes to the Marsh line between the upland portion of the City and the centerline of the River. While it is not the intent of the MHD to enforce any State or Federal Laws or regulations (DNR has limited staff for regulation of the Coast - two individuals), any assistance the City could provide would be in the State's and the City's best interest. This would require revisions to State law that would propose to shift any enforcement activities from DNR/EPD to the City. In any event, regardless of any future revisions to state or federal law, all existing laws and regulations must be maintained. Whether the City will have the means and equipment to assist DNR is totally up to City Council.
- e. Enforcement: If the City requires any enforcement on the River, the Camden County Sheriff's Department could be contracted to use their equipment and personnel.
- f. Georgia Coastal Marshland Protection Committee: The current state law permits live-aboard vessels for 90 days. After 90 days, a request for an extension must be approved by the head of the Coastal Marshland Protection Committee. If the extension is approved, a full year will be the term of the stay. At the end of the year, an extension must again be requested for an additional year, and so on. To date NO extensions have been issued. It has been suggested that if the City designates the SMIG dock as a marina through GA; coordinates this with the FL designation of our four buoys as a mooring field; and provides a pump out facility for boats docked there, permission to allow live-aboard vessels would be possible with extensions sought in accordance with existing regulations. The City and its boating community must show that we can police and regulate the waterside to the legally required standards.
- g. St. Marys River Management Committee: This Committee is a sub-set of the St. Johns River Management Committee. This committee, made up of representatives of Nassau and Baker Counties in Florida, and Camden and Charlton Counties in Georgia, and generally oversees and monitors issues that will affect the environmental stability of the St. Marys River.
- h. City of St. Marys Planning Commission: Since this is an overlay district that relates to Zoning, the planning commission must review the application by the City of any proposed ordinance. This will require advertisement in the paper 31 days in advance of the meeting, posting of the property, a minimum of one public hearing, and a regular meeting and vote to

recommend to Council approval or denial of the application. Regardless of the vote, the application will be sent on to the City Council for review and approval.

- i. City of St. Marys Historic Preservation Commission: The HPC has jurisdiction over this site as well. However, Zoning issues are not included in their responsibilities. The proposed built environment is within their jurisdiction, and this will be necessary if any new project, renovations to existing structures, signage or landscaping is proposed.
- j. City Council: City Council has the Authority to create zoning classifications and other ordinances and agreements that are in the best interest of the City.
- k. State of Florida: There are a number of agencies within the State of Florida that regulate their half of the St. Marys River and the related marshes. These agencies would only be involved if the City would request a contract for regulation of mooring and transit of the Florida half of the St. Marys River. Enforcement would be by Florida officials.
- l. Nassau County, FL: The Board of County Commissioners is the local governmental agency for the land across from the City. These lands are not in private hands, but are held by various agencies of Florida government.

**STAKEHOLDERS:** In addition to the regulatory bodies noted above, a number of formal or informal citizen groups will have a keen interest in what is being proposed.

- a. Kiwanis
- b. Downtown Merchant Association
- c. Downtown Development Authority (DDA)
- d. St. Marys Intracoastal Gateway Committee
- e. Cumberland Island National Seashore
- f. Saltwater Fishing Association
- g. The Crabbing and Shrimping Industry
- h. Various School Ship organizations
- i. Various Cruise Ship associations
- j. Tribune-Georgian
- k. St. Marys Magazine
- l. St. Marys Convention and Visitor Center
- m. Other organizations as requested or submitted

**SEA LEVEL RISE AND FLOOD ELEVATIONS:** Currently there is a lot of discussion on the impact of Global warming and sea level rise. Data available indicates that sea level could rise in our harbor by an unverified estimate of 9 inches in 30 years. This will cause some flooding at the edges of the City during a normal weather pattern. However, this 9 inch - plus possible surge levels for a hurricane - could create concerns with the MHD-L overlay district. The City is seeking funding in conjunction with University of Georgia and NOAA to provide a study that will identify risks, area of these risks, and 'tools in the toolbox' for addressing these issues when – and if – they arise in the future. The City will also be working to initiate the Community Rating System (CRS) to provide our residents in the flood area with some savings in their premiums.

**NAVIGABLE CHANNEL:** Today, our harbor is a multi-use seaport, and it is imperative that all users of our harbor, dock, and mooring facilities have dependable access for use in coming and going. The navigable channel needs to be free of any hazards to navigation.

According to those who use the harbor regularly, the navigable channel is defined as the centerline of the deepest part of the river (as determined by sounding or sonar) and approximately 100 feet on

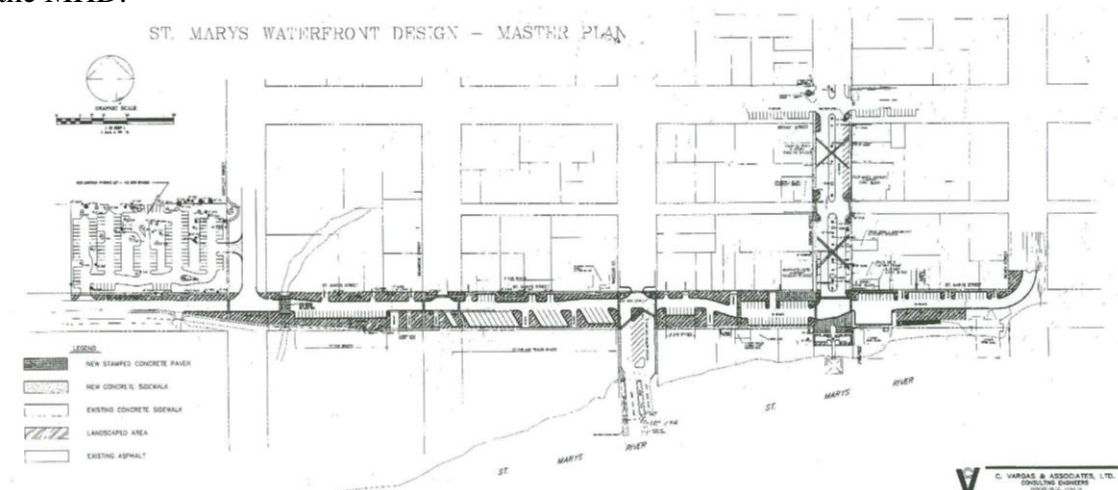
either side of this line. Since the deepest part of the river changes over time, the navigable channel will also change. Those mariners with proper navigation skills have accommodated the shifting of the channel.

To make all mariners aware of the channel, the MHD, in conjunction with those who rely on the channel, is proposing to create a document that will clearly indicate where the navigable channel is at the time of preparation (with updates) and documentation as to how to determine where this channel is. This will clearly indicate where certain activities can – and cannot – take place as well as determine maneuvering area for exclusive use of all vessels coming and going. Area outside this channel will always be available for fishing and crabbing activities, as well as the anchoring of transient vessels in accordance with the laws of either Georgia or Florida, depending on which side of the border the vessel is anchored.

According to the crabbers, there is apparently a courtesy ‘rule’ that the local crabbers use around vessels anchored in the harbor by the general boating community. Although their DNR ‘license’ permits them to crab anywhere outside of the navigable channel, they voluntarily keep their traps about 100 feet away from anchored or moored vessels.

There have been a few very minor incidents between crabbers and anchored vessels, but these have apparently been resolved with little or no acrimony.

**EXISTING MASTER PLANS:** Over many years, there have been a number of attempts at creating a master plan for the Waterfront Area. The Master Plan that appears to be the one that has been referred to many times was created by Vargas and Associates. This master plan was fully detailed with an early phase completed. This Master Plan, with revisions appropriate and coordinate with the Maritime Heritage Master Plan, will form the basis for the MHD-L portion of the MHD.



**MHD MASTER PLAN:** A detailed MHD Master Plan will be required to outline the conceptual goals of the MHD and establish the dimensional characteristics of the MHD and its uses. This MHD plan must incorporate all of the requirements of past planning efforts, as well as the varying requirements of each agency having jurisdiction.

For the purposes of this report, a DRAFT master plan has been prepared for the MHD-L and MHD-W parts of the MHD.



The MHD-L (Landside) Portion of MHD will be an overlay of the existing C-1 Zone. All uses by right, and special uses listed in the C-1 section of the Zoning Ordinance 110 will be proposed to remain as presently listed. All present continuation of existing non-conforming use parcels shall remain as existing. The section noting “uses related to maritime operations” will be eliminated from the C-1 district and inserted/defined in the proposed new Overlay MHD-L district. This will not change the use in the C-1 district, but will allow other adjacent properties to be included in the overlay district.

The MHD-W (Waterside) portion of the MHD will be an overlay of all of the DNR controlled marsh area from the mean high water line or restive vegetation line, and all river areas to the limits of the city of St. Marys. This will include the entire CP, Conservation-Preservation District as delineated on the DRAFT map and related portions of any zoning classification containing marsh as defined herein. The section noting “residential/caretaker” will be eliminated from the CP district and inserted/defined in the proposed new Overlay MHD-W district.

**MHD OVERLAY RELATED TO EXISTING ZONING:** While there are enhancements, clarifications, and modified definitions in the proposed overlay that will of necessity affect the existing underlying zoning, it is not the intent of the MHD to alter or revise any existing zoning already present and approved by Council. Any proposed use that is contrary to the existing zoning or requiring re-zoning by Council action is not part of this report.

**MHD-L OVERLAY CONCEPT:** The MHD-L Overlay will permit the following additional or expanded uses to the uses contained in the C-1 District as related to maritime heritage activities.

- Museums with nautical themes.
- Shops with items for sale to residents and visitors alike that relate to the history of the City and maritime activities.
- Festivals of a maritime nature separate from existing festivals.
- Shops creating traditional or modern maritime articles on the premises and for sale, such as rope, knots, fishing gear, buoys, maps, etc.
- Shops catering to the boating public such as purser supplies, and general grocery items.
- Vendors for fresh seafood right off the ship.
- Restaurants with outdoor seating overlooking the marsh/water.
- Bait shop.
- Fresh seafood processing and shipping.
- Parks and other recreational facilities – public and private.
- Convenience store for boating and general grocery supplies for boaters.
- Expanded restrooms to include pay showers, and pay laundry facilities.



The following use shall be permitted only by issuance of a special use permit, and only for locations suitable for this special use. Locations that front St. Marys or Osborne Street will not be considered for this special use. *(Note: Existing uses will be permitted to remain without a special use as a continuation of an existing non-conforming use).*

- Fenced ground level boat storage with a landscaped buffer between the fence and the property line. Boat storage ‘stacks’ limited to a maximum of two levels of boats, with roof and buffer.
- Horse drawn carriages for touring within the MHD-L district, which will include areas for overnight accommodation of horses, mules, and donkeys that pull the carriages.

**MHD-W OVERLAY CONCEPT:** The MHD-W district shall apply to all docks, bulkheads, boat ramps, marinas, marsh walks and any manmade fixed constructs from the marsh line as determined by DNR extending through the marsh (including buffer) or in the water to the City limits. For the purpose of this report, these constructs shall be referred to by the term *fixed constructs*.



The MHD-W district shall also include all ships, boats, trawlers, dinghies, and any manmade floating construct that floats on, is anchored through, or floats below, the water of the St. Marys River and its numerous tributaries, named or unnamed. For the purpose of this report, these constructs shall be referred to by the term *floating constructs*. For the purpose of this report, any floating dock attached to a fixed dock shall be treated as a *fixed construct*.

Uses proposed for the MHD-W overlay will consist of all of the uses within the CP Zone except for the following revised sections: (*NOTE: the CP Zone is present in wetlands and other marsh areas outside the limits of the overlay district, and these exceptions will not apply to these portions of the CP Zone.*)

- Farms for the growing of agricultural products, or timber will be permitted but not include dwelling unit for owner or operator of the farm on the parcel.
- Wildlife refuges will be permitted, but not include dwelling units of caretakers.

The following uses will not be permitted in the MHD-W overlay district.

- Any use that is not related to the adjacent zoning of any parcel. (*Note: The zones that abut the MHD-W overlay are R-1, R-2, R-3, C-1, C-2. There are no I-G, I-A, or I-L zones adjacent to the MHD-W overlay.*)
- Anchoring for any reason within the defined ship channel.

The MHD-W overlay will have the following permitted overlay uses:

- City sponsored and owned marina/docks/wharfs/buoys for use by docking agreement
- Mooring fields managed by the City and as permitted by the State of GA and the State of FL.
- Live-a-boards as permitted by the State of GA and ‘tied’ to an adjacent marina.
- Clarification of how a defined channel for ships to enter and leave the port is determined. This will provide much needed clarification for the pleasure boating public to eliminate any confusion as to where – or where not – to anchor.
- Mooring locations including buoys with permit sought and issued by DNR on a case by case basis.
- Confirmation that crabbing activities shall be by DNR permit in all water areas outside of the defined navigable channel.

## **IMPACT ON THE CITY**

### **1. POSITIVE IMPACTS**

- a. The City will be able to focus attention on the area that needs additional opportunities for growth that conforms to our Comprehensive Plan: which was to provide more opportunity for our Citizens and visitors to access the waterfront. This will require the preparation of a MHD overlay zoning ordinance. This ordinance will provide the legal framework for the items discussed above.
- b. Maritime History aficionados are attracted to our Waterfront because of the Cumberland Island Ferry, the St. Marys Submarine Museum, and the ongoing effort to attract tall ships and cruise ships. The more people who will stay downtown and spend their discretionary time and funds here, the more our economy will improve and our revenues increase.
- c. More visitors, increased opportunities for commercial businesses, increased value of commercial property which will result in additional property tax, more employees of businesses which will increase the occupation tax revenue.
- d. Increased opportunity for festivals and other activities for citizens and tourist visitors alike.
- e. Increased opportunities for businesses along Osborne to benefit from increased traffic flows to the Waterfront.
- f. A more vibrant residential community due to the increased job opportunities from a vibrant waterfront business district.

### **2. NEGATIVE IMPACTS**

- a. Increased traffic both waterside and landside.
- b. Increased demand for parking of cars, vehicles with boat trailers, buses, RV's.
- c. Increased demand for docking and launching privileges. The Wheeler Street dock may become inadequate.
- d. Operational and Docking conflicts between power and sail boat owners and operators.
- e. Need for additional pump out facilities for larger ships.
- f. Increased demand for the expansion of the C-1 district to accommodate new businesses in areas adjacent to the waterfront.
- g. Conflicts between crabbers and other vessels in and out of the channel.
- h. Too many anchored boats for safe operation in and out of the channel.
- i. With the proposed modifications to St. Marys Street, the present 'turning lane' will not be available for deliveries to St. Marys Street businesses. *(Note: Although this is listed as a negative, there are solutions to accommodate deliveries. These solutions are beyond the scope of this report.)*
- j. An increase in trash and recycler able materials that will require better and more attractive waste containers and methods for removal.

**SCHEDULE FOR CREATING THE MHD OVERLAY DISTRICT:** The administrative creation of the MHD-L Overlay District will be at minimal out of pocket cost. A simplified process would be for the Planning Commission to review and comment on the proposed district, and then, after City Attorney review, the City Council would be asked to review and approve the creation of the overlay district. Timing of every step is up to the Citizens and Council. No dates have been inserted for that reason.

1. Staff creates first public DRAFT 1 of the proposed MHD.
2. Public Hearing and discussion of the first DRAFT 1 by the Planning Commission (PC).
3. Incorporation of the PC Comments into a revised DRAFT 2 for review by the City Council (CC).
4. Presentation of DRAFT 2 to the CC for brief review, and scheduling of the first public workshop to review and discuss the MHD with our citizens.
5. Incorporation of any applicable comments by our citizens into a revised DRAFT 3.
6. Public hearing and discussion of DRAFT 3 with the PC.
7. Incorporation of any applicable comments from the PC into DRAFT 4.
8. Presentation of DRAFT 4 to the CC for brief review, and scheduling of the second public workshop to review and discuss DRAFT 4 with our citizens.
9. Incorporation of any applicable comments by our citizens into a revised DRAFT 4.
10. Presentation of DRAFT 4 to the City Attorney for review and approval as to form.
11. Presentation of DRAFT 4 to CC after City Attorney approval for approval by the CC.
12. Ordinance takes effect when all of the above is completed.

**BUDGET COSTS FOR CREATING THE MHD OVERLAY DISTRICT:** At this time, there will be no financial impacts presented for insertion into present or future budgets of the City, since this is the prevue of City Council. All work related to the creation of this overlay district will be accomplished by Staff after authorization by the Mayor and Council.

There will be a future, discretionary; impact on the Budget for certain identified projects. These costs have not been quantified or prioritized as part of this report.

However, there has already been work accomplished in the MHD overlay district:

**MHD-W Overlay**

- A. Safety and ADA improvements to the Gateway Dock.
- B. Relocation of a useless floating dock at the Gateway Dock to a location where vessels can actually use it.
- C. As a result of TS Beryl, damage to the remaining docks was extensive. With the repair of these docks paid for by our insurance carrier, our City docks are in good condition.
- D. Funds allocated for the removal of approx. four (4) abandoned and sunken boats in our immediate harbor area.
- E. Funds allocated for installation and/or maintenance of the buoys in the St. Marys River.
- F. Discussion of and presentation to Council of a proposed Docking Agreement to regulate the use of City owned docks, wharfs, and buoys.



MHD-L Overlay

- A. Purchase of Gilman Waterfront property and discussions with potential developers.
- B. Receipt of a Transportation Enhancement Grant for the Gateway project (the former Gilman Waterfront property).
- C. Ongoing effort to update our permits with Georgia and Florida.

**PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO ENHANCE THE CREATION OF THE MHD**

**DISTRICT:** There have been many comments and suggestions as to what projects could be implemented in the future to enhance the MHD-L and MHD-W districts after creation. Since implementation the possible enhancements would require specific City Council approval and assurance of funding, ATTACHMENT A (which follows this report) has been created. Hopefully this listing will stimulate the imagination as to the possibilities that this overlay district could generate.

**SUMMARY:** The City has a treasure in our waterfront, its parks, and its relationship to the River and Ocean. The St. Marys waterfront and wharfs were – and still are - the embarkation point of choice for citizens and visitors departing on trips world-wide, and for our heritage industries of crabbing, shrimping, and fishing to continue unimpeded.

The establishment of a Maritime Heritage District Overlay will recognize this rich history, and create a desirable destination at our Waterfront!!

\* \* \* \* **END OF REPORT** \* \* \* \*

# **ATTACHMENT A**

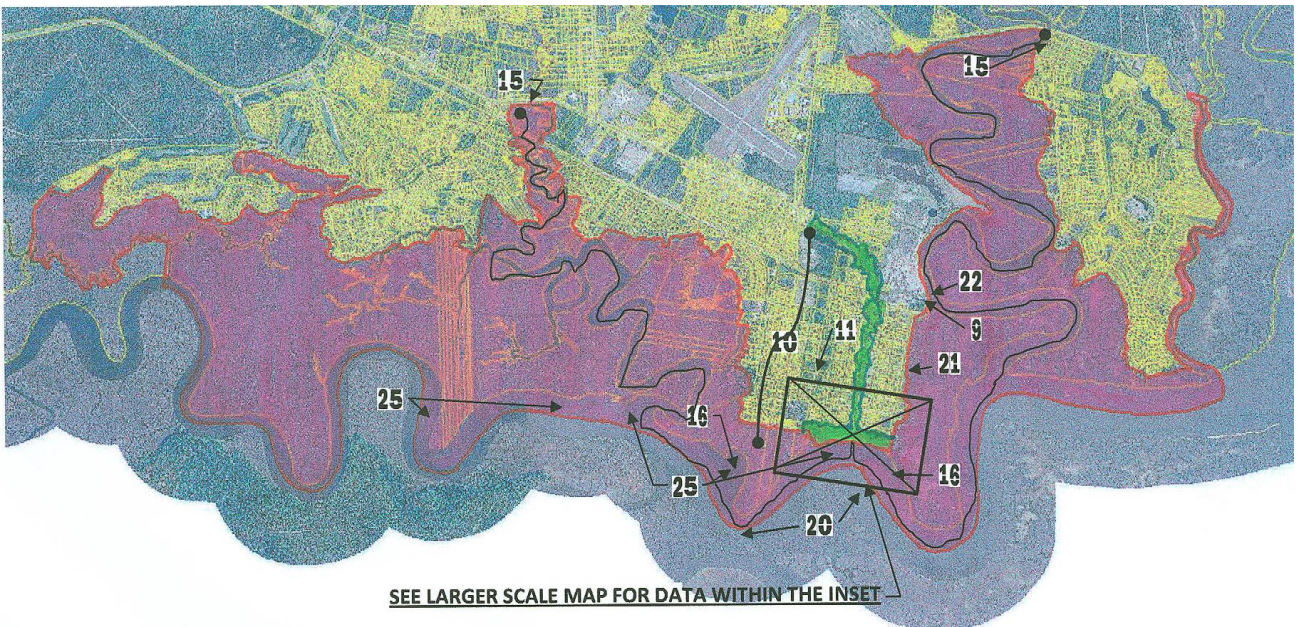
## **PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO ENHANCE THE CREATION OF THE MHD**

**DISTRICT:** There have been many comments and suggestions as to what projects could be implemented in the future to enhance the MHD-L and MHD-W districts after creation. Since implementation the possible enhancements would require specific City Council approval and assurance of funding, this listing as an attachment is only to stimulate the imagination.

Some of the enhancements are either already in the process of implementation while others are completed. The number of the item in ‘A’ and ‘B’ below directly refers to the maps that are inserted between ‘A’ and ‘B’. Every proposed enhancement is contingent on the availability of funding. It is beyond the scope of this report to investigate the feasibility and funding of any of the future enhancements without City Council authorization to accomplish a more detailed study.

A. For the MHD-L portion of the overlay district, the MHD-L may include, but not be limited to:

1. Widening of the sidewalk on the north side of St. Marys Street between Wheeler Street and Ready Street to accommodate ‘European’ style café opportunities for the restaurants and businesses. The additional space would be from the elimination of the middle turning lane (the sole use of which is delivery vehicles) and other renovations.
2. Creation of a covered daily open air farmer’s market with stalls.
3. Creation of a landscape plan for the South Side of St. Marys Street between Osborne and Ready within the present City ROW to include swings, trellises, and palm trees.
4. Creation of a boutique hotel/restaurant/conference center on the old Gilman property.
5. Creation of a hotel, conference center, or other use compatible with the goals of this report, the historic district, and the C-1 zoned Bartlett Street property owned by the City.
6. Creation of a museum of maritime and local history, to be located either on the water (in the vacant area adjacent to Lang’s Restaurant, or the lower level of Orange Hall).
7. Creation of a “Marsh Discovery Center” on the lands of the former Weed Street WWTP either independently or in conjunction with a branch of a Georgia College.
8. Create a new launch ramp at the foot of Ready Street to accommodate the increased demand for ramp facilities. There was a ‘dirt’ ramp and dock located here in the past, but this has fallen out of use in recent years.
9. Provide up-to-date restroom facilities at the Meeting Street Boat Ramp.
10. Create a wetlands/marsh walk between the Norris Pavilion Marsh walk to the St. Marys Public Library via Bartlett Street. This wetlands/marshwalk was proposed as part of a ‘Walkability Study’ accomplished by the CRC with funding by GaDOT.
11. Close Bartlett Street between W. Conyers and W. Alexander, and in conjunction with the presently closed Dillingham Street between Mahan and Seagrove, create a linear park, with festival and recreational opportunities for citizens and tourists.
12. Encourage Development of additional options to accommodate the expected additional vehicle traffic close to the Waterfront.

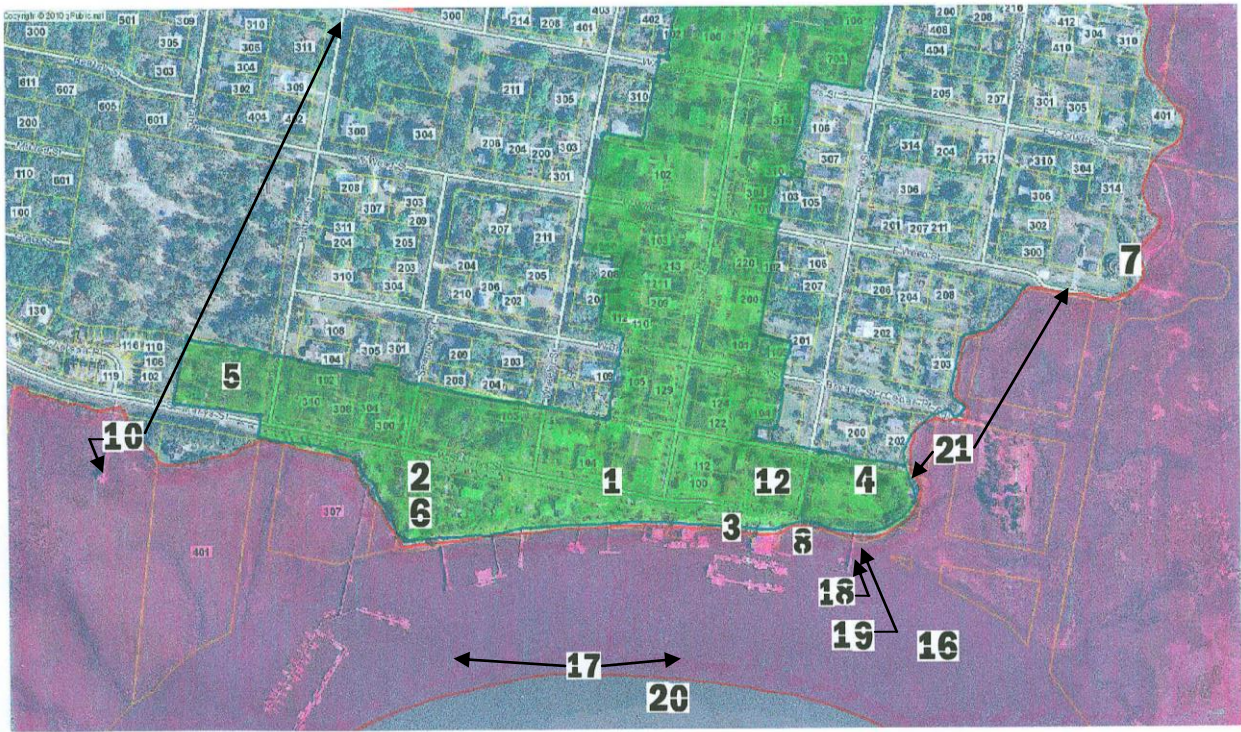


## OVERALL MAP SHOWING PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO ENHANCE THE MHD

Numbers refer to the report numbers. See also the smaller scale map for numbers not shown on this drawing.

13. Continue to support the Masonic Order in the renovation of the Washington Pump and Oak memorial. Council has approved the concept for this renovation, and the Masons are in the process of raising funds for construction.
  14. In conjunction with GaDOT, install median islands from Church Street to Dilworth Street. This is part of Ga40 and will require their approval. Median Islands are considered traffic calming devices. Design and landscaping of these median islands would be similar to the 'new' islands adjacent to the St. Marys Elementary School.
- B. For the MHD-W portion of the overlay district:
15. Create a Kayak trail from the Dark Entry Creek ramp to a new take out facility on the North River at the North River Causeway, prior to the bridge, with designated stopovers along the way.
  16. By valid permit from DNR (there are no mooring fields in GA at present), create a mooring field for large vessels, and one (or two) for smaller vessels. This field – if permitted – would be managed by the City. *(Note: The four permitted buoys in FL are considered by FL to be a mooring field.)*
  17. Identify on a map and text the method for determining how to identify and use the present navigation channel to facilitate maneuvering of small and large ships to the existing and proposed mooring fields, docks, wharfs, and boat ramps.
  18. Create additional opportunities for docking of large vessels (currently underway), and for additional ferry options to other islands (Amelia, Jekyll, St. Simons, etc.)
  19. Create a pump out facility for large ships and for vessels moored/anchored in the harbor.
  20. Work with Florida to get permission to administrate the anchorage and mooring of ships in the portion of the St. Marys River that is directly opposite of the designated MHD-L Overlay district. Law enforcement by Florida authorities.
  21. Create a marsh walk connecting the former Gilman property to the proposed “Marsh Discovery Center” and the North River Kayak launch facility.





**LARGER SCALE MAP SHOWING PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO ENHANCE THE MHD**

Numbers refer to the report numbers. See also the smaller scale map for numbers not shown on this drawing.

22. Expand the Meeting Street Wharf by approx. 50 feet to accommodate additional vessels.
23. Obtain and use a small power boat to administer the MHD-W portion of the Overlay District. This boat will also be useful in any storm or flood related incident.
24. Retain a Dock Master to administer both the MHD-L and the MHD-W portions of the Overlay District. Contract with the Camden County Sheriff's office for law enforcement of specifically identified laws within the MHD-W district, and with the St. Marys Police Department for law enforcement of specifically identified laws within the MHD-L district.
25. Continue efforts to remove abandoned and derelict vessels in the area of the MHD-W District.
26. Create a Docking Agreement for use in administration of vessels wishing to use the MHD-W facilities.
27. Create a Marine Tourist Visitor Center in conjunction with the Maritime Heritage Museum.
28. Adapt the fireworks dock to a 'fixed' floating dock for an increase in the number of small boats that could dock in the City.
29. NOT SHOWN: Obtain permission for legally acceptable signage on the Intercoastal waterway noting that this is the route to St. Marys (or other appropriate wordage).
30. NOT SHOWN: Place as approved and as appropriate signage on all public docks/wharfs/buoys noting rules, fees, times of availability, phone numbers, etc.
31. NOT SHOWN: Work with FL and GA to create a St. Marys Riverkeeper position funded by donations and appropriate government funding.



32. NOT SHOWN: Provide fire department piping for the DNR Dock and the Kayak/Fireworks Dock similar to that provided at the SMIG Dock.
33. NOT SHOWN: Reconstruct the galley 'St. Marys' which was one of the first twelve ships built by the fledgling US Navy. This ship was built in St. Marys and plans are available in the Smithsonian Museum, Washington, DC.

\* \* \* \* **END OF ATTACHMENT A** \* \* \* \*

# IMAGES OF OLD MYSTIC SEAPORT

The similarities to our City are remarkable, including having a nearby Sub-base at Groton!!)

